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AUTHOR Pavela, Gary  
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## ABSTRACT

In this age of rapid change, colleges and universities must expect their personnel to view relationships with students as a form of voluntary association. This means being dedicated to the intellectual and moral development of students as association members and the good of the larger community. This booklet examines a historical perspective of higher education's relationship with its students. A discussion of voluntary association examines why association is important. Also explained are the following principles of association that colleges should affirm: those who associate in the college community are committed to the pursuit of truth; the pursuit of truth is guided by a process; and the nature of the goal and the process used to pursue it are molded by a permanent duty to honor those who precede and to leave a better world for those who will follow. The following virtues are presented as being required to adhere to higher education's principles: honesty, respect, civility, self-restraint, empathy, compassion, and a sense of responsibility. Virtues can be taught by: clearly stating community values, including academic honesty, civility, and respect for freedom of thought and expression; treating the statement of values as more than stale dogma; asking students ethical questions both in and out of class; role modeling; giving students significant responsibility to manage their own affairs; encouraging the development of empathy; creating environments where personal interaction can flourish; promoting group bonding through service; enforcing reasonable rules; and enforcing rules fairly. (Contains 24 references.) (MKA)

# Defining Our Relationship with Students in the 21st Century

by  
**GARY PAVEL**

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# THE POWER OF ASSOCIATION

## *Defining Our Relationship with Students in the 21st Century*

by  
GARY PAVELA

Colleges and universities are in the midst of profound change. There is a sense of rapid acceleration toward an uncertain future. Some observers think many institutions as physical plants will disappear.

The likely prospect is that higher education institutions will be educating larger numbers of students (many nontraditional), frequently at home or in the work place, using new technology and placing greater reliance upon internships, cooperative learning, and student collaboration. Courses will be shorter (some lasting a few days or weeks), and calibrated to the needs and interests of individual students. Education for larger numbers of younger people may become more vocational, taught by practitioners, while education for older people will focus more on the liberal arts. Over time, when students appear on campus more of them will be older (and wiser) than many student affairs professionals and faculty members. Also, when reference is made to "campuses," more students will think first of community colleges.

Many of these changes are welcome. They will reduce the self-perpetuating, bureaucratic priorities of large universities and help larger numbers of students achieve what they say they want from a college education: a good job.

Other changes may contribute to a harmful process in which more Americans lead lives of isolation, disconnected from any effort to gain a broader understanding of the world, with a diminished sense of social trust and social commitment.

Although a change in orientation will be required, it remains within the power of colleges and universities to reduce the growing sense of fragmentation and alienation among our students and in American life. This objective may prove even more important than the con-

tributions universities provided to national security during the cold war. Much depends, however, on how we define our relationship with students.

Society will be better served if we draw upon our historical foundations, and see our relationship with students as a revitalized form of *voluntary association*—dedicated to fostering the intellectual and moral development of association members, and the good of the larger community.

### A Historical Perspective

In his book, *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America*, Ernest Boyer (1987) wrote that what he and his colleagues "found particularly disturbing" was "the ambivalence college administrators feel about their overall responsibility for student behavior" (p. 203). Such ambivalence has recent causes but it may also reflect the multiple ways college administrators have understood their relationship with students.

There is one early tradition, among some of the great European universities, in which the relationship between students and "administrators" (professors, in the early days) was defined by the students. In his book, *The Rise of Universities*, Charles Homer Haskins (1957) told the story of how "hundreds of students" being "far from home and undefended united for mutual protection," thereby constituting "the beginning of the university" at Bologna (p. 8). Haskins believes this association of students was modeled on the guilds common in Europe at the time, and that "the word university means originally such a group or corporation in general," not simply guilds of students and teachers. Whatever the

derivation of the term, the students in the "university" at Bologna, according to Haskins, exercised great authority:

The professor was put under bond to live up to a minute set of regulations which guaranteed his students the worth of the money paid by each. We read in the earliest statutes (1317) that a professor might not be absent without leave, even for a single day, and if he desired to leave town he had to make a deposit to ensure his return. If he failed to secure an audience of five for a regular lecture, he was fined as if absent (p. 10).

Not every early university followed this model. Some, especially in France and England, were led by masters or monks accountable to the church. Students had little responsibility for governance, sometimes living in "colleges" under harsh discipline. This was the kind of university transported to America, and it endured without significant competition until the German ideal of scholarly work and research (usually in graduate and professional schools) took hold.

*In loco parentis* has been the dominant theory defining the relationship between students and colleges in America, at least until the 1950s and 1960s. It was compounded by the rural setting of many American institutions and the need to provide supervision for young students far from home. The authority exercised could be pervasive, as seen in an example from Ollinger Crenshaw's (1969) history of Washington and Lee University:

A student could not call his fellows by nicknames . . . or "presume to play ball in Lexington at any time" . . . He was not permitted to "play cards, dice, or any unlawful game," to visit a tavern "at unreasonable hours," to "engage at any dancing school" . . . or in "any debauching revel whatever (commonly known by the names of frolics Dances Balls Entertainments)." When the rector or tutor entered a room every student was required to "rise up with a decent bow" (p. 18).

Perhaps out of exhaustion from efforts to manage student social life, or an overriding commitment to scholarship and research, or a desire (harkening back to Bologna) to give students more authority to govern themselves, there has also been a tradition in some American colleges of exercising authority through appeals to honor rather than detailed disciplinary codes. This approach, still alive today, was endorsed by President Nott of Union College in 1854:

Little reliance has been placed on appeals to the principle of fear. Emulation has been appealed to . . . Moral and religious instruction, the sense of honor, and the love of knowledge

have been principally relied on; whilst the chief concern has been to teach the young men to bring themselves under the inward principle rather than of outward fear and restraint (cited in Rudolph, 1962, pp. 107-08).

*In loco parentis*, especially the variety exercised by detailed regulation of student life, has now been discredited in theory and, to a lesser extent, in practice. The transformation occurred over four decades, and probably started with the enrollment of GIs after World War II. It was advanced by the civil rights movement, the campus rebellions of the 1960s, the growth of Clark Kerr's (1995) "multiversity," the lowering of the age of majority, the expansion of adult education programs, and, until recently, a distrust of any assertion of general moral standards. All helped to give students procedural rights and a degree of personal autonomy previous generations had never known.

The momentum for greater student rights was accelerated in the late 1970s and 1980s by the consumer protection movement. Students began to see themselves as "customers" seeking "services" — a view reenforced by federal and state legislation protecting student privacy and requiring that "consumer information" about financial aid, campus security, and other services be made available to applicants for admission.

### Risk Management or Student Development?

Ironically, the view of students as "consumers" has started a process in which the expanded notion of student rights is being circumscribed. Concerns about campus safety and security have prompted some colleges to try to set stricter standards for student conduct or to disassociate themselves from student activities (especially fraternities) altogether. What confuses and troubles student affairs administrators, as other commentators have suggested, is the fact that these trends are driven largely by risk management theories, not any effort to promote student development.

Many student affairs administrators remain convinced that most traditional-aged students are caught in a "middle" stage of development, somewhere between adolescence and full adulthood.

This perspective is shared by prominent author and psychiatrist Willard Gaylin (1989), who voiced it at the close of a *Synthesis* interview:

Our society is creating dependent children well into their twenties, if not their thirties. Yet more and more we're treating them as though they are autonomous adults. We are taking children and throwing them into a particularly cold and detached environment at major universities . . . There is, I think, an extraordinary avoidance of the fact that you're dealing with essentially a not-yet fully-mature population. Universities need to come to grips with the fact that in this autonomous time, paternalism may be unattractive, but necessary (p. 53).

Willard Gaylin's advice probably will not be followed if it is seen as a call for a return to *in loco parentis*. Likewise, the type of control he advocates — grounded in an environment committed to the intellectual and moral development of students — does not fit the "risk management" mentality. College administrators who share his views, and who also seek to promote a view of college as a principled community serving students of all ages, need another model. Fortunately, one is readily available, so much a part of the general social background that it frequently goes unrecognized: *the concept of voluntary association*. This is a model that can enable us to foster a sense of community among students of different ages and backgrounds, working on or off campus.

### What Voluntary Association Means

In strict legal terms, colleges and universities are corporations. However, for many academics, the word *corporation* has a hollow ring, suggestive more of legal powers and responsibilities than human relationships. A better description of what most colleges aspire to create (even those within multiversities) is a *community*, sharing at least some essential values and commitments. At heart, this community is contractual, a voluntary association of individuals "presumed to be equally interested in promoting the welfare of the association" (Associations, 1963, p. 446). Examples of voluntary associations include state or national medical societies and groups such as the League of Women Voters and the National Urban League.

Many worry that the American capacity for association is declining. Still, Americans are more likely than people in most cultures to join associations, a trait rooted deep in our history, noted by Alexis De Tocqueville (1956) in his *Democracy in America*:

Americans of all ages, all conditions, and all dispositions, constantly form associations. They have not only commercial and manufacturing companies, in which all take part, but associations of a thousand other kinds — religious, moral, serious, futile, general, or restricted, enormous or diminutive. The Americans make associations . . . to found seminaries, to build inns, to construct churches, to diffuse books, to send missionaries to the Antipodes . . . If it be proposed to inculcate some truth or to foster some feeling by the encouragement of a great example, they form a society. Whenever, at the head of some new undertaking, you see the government in France, or a man of rank in England, in the United States you will be sure to find an association (p. 198).

Unlike the early guilds of students and professors, the American association is typically outward looking. Many exist for reasons that go beyond protecting a particular class or occupation. Some (for example, the Boy and Girl Scouts) start with the goal of helping individual members but link that goal to a broader social commitment. While membership in an association is voluntary, members normally have duties or responsibilities, specified in rules or bylaws, and enforced through a disciplinary process. The fact that an association sets professional or ethical standards does not make it vicariously liable when members (not acting as agents of the association) violate them.

It is easy to think of colleges as voluntary associations because, in the narrow sense of guilds, that is how some of the most ancient colleges were established. There are also many modern examples, including a recent example from the school setting: the relationship between the well-known math teacher Jaime Escalante and his students, depicted in the film, "Stand and Deliver."

Many observers would not see Escalante and his students as an "association" at all. Still, on a small scale, they show how the concept of voluntary association can fit in an educational setting, even when students are not accustomed to having academic demands placed on them.

Those who saw the film, "Stand and Deliver" will recall that Escalante appeared to be remarkably successful in improving both the math skills and personal deportment of a group of disadvantaged high school students. He did so by setting high expectations for the students and working tirelessly with them to improve their skills and attitudes. At the heart of Escalante's approach was a contract — a commitment by each student to do all the extra work required (including Saturday review sessions) to meet a shared performance goal.

Also implicit in the effort was a broader social commitment: the desire to demonstrate to other students in similar circumstances that academic success was possible and desirable.

On a larger scale, with minor variations, the personal and social goals reflected in the "association" of Escalante and his students are precisely what the best American colleges try to accomplish with college students of all ages and backgrounds. Those goals also demonstrate the kinds of relationships and social commitments the larger society urgently needs.

### Why Voluntary Association is Important

There is a clear sense in American society that the social fabric has weakened. People seem to distrust each other more and cooperate less, at least in voluntary efforts outside the work place.

Robert Putnam, Dillon Professor of International Affairs at Harvard University and author of the famous "Bowling Alone" article in the January 1995 issue of *The Journal of Democracy*, believes a major factor in the loss of trust and community has been television. Putnam (1995) told the *Washington Post* that he found "a negative correlation between the number of hours an individual watches television and both the number of groups the individual joins and the level of social trust" (p. A5).

The role of television in weakening community has ominous implications as another wave of communications technology approaches. College administrators, for example, already report cases of "Internet addiction" involving students who are fascinated by communicating with others at a distance, but unable or unwilling to join in the life of the "real" community in which they live.

The general sense of deterioration in community and social trust, driven in part by the images of violence and turmoil on television, seems to have influenced an entire generation of young adults. While assessments differ, most observers conclude that many young Americans are caught in a "tyranny of self." Peter Zollo, a researcher in Northbrook, Illinois, surveyed the attitudes of 2,000 young people aged 12 to 19 in 1993 and found that nearly 70 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement: "I always try to have as much fun as I possibly can. I don't know what the

future holds." Zollo (1994) told *American Demographics* magazine that the current cohort of American teenagers should be described as a "cynical" generation, whose "natural reaction to the stress around them is to have as much fun as they can, because future life may be real tough" (p. 10).

A cynical generation of students will view their education primarily as a means to gain competitive advantage in an uncertain economy — a conclusion supported by a series of national surveys on why students go to college. The candid views some students express in this regard can be startling, as reflected in an interview the author conducted with a University of Maryland student being expelled for academic dishonesty:

Q: Is [engaging in cheating] fair to [honest] students?

A: I don't think of it like that. I know some students do. But the attitude is generally this is the way it is. When they work, a lot of these kids, either their fathers work in business, whatever they do, they get a shortcut; the other guy doesn't. That's the way I look at it. If I'm sharp enough to know the right people to get what I need, and he's not, then that's the point of the whole thing.

Educators are sometimes troubled by the fact that only a minority of students report that one of their important objectives is "developing a meaningful philosophy of life." Students are seen as confused and aimless, without a philosophical perspective. The truth may be different, and worse. Many students *do* have a philosophy of life: it is called social Darwinism.

There are serious long-term consequences for any society where large numbers of people see themselves primarily as isolated individuals competing for survival.

First, as James Q. Wilson (1993) wrote in his book *The Moral Sense*, it is in association with others (initially in families, clans, and races but expanding outward to the entire human family as we mature) that we learn to develop the capacity for empathy, a sense of duty, and fair dealing. Association with others enables us to develop a conscience and a moral sense — qualities that seem to distinguish us from other animals. Relationship is so fundamental that some philosophers and theologians, Martin Buber as an example, see it as our primary connection with an ultimate meaning.

Second, trust is the social glue that makes any large, complex society work. Every moment of our lives depends upon the reciprocal obligations of people unseen to us — from the grocer who sold us our food, the architect who designed our house, or the researcher who gave us new information. It is doubtful we could live,

with sanity, if we thought we lived in a world where no one could be trusted.

Finally, association, relationship, and trust are essential to the highest forms of happiness. An article in the January 1995 issue of *Psychological Science* contains an analysis of studies about what makes human beings happy (Myers & Diener, p. 10). The authors confirm what most of our mothers told us at an early age: happiness does not depend upon acquiring more possessions, once we have life's necessities. Ultimately, what gives us the greatest happiness are active involvement in productive work, a belief that life has meaning and purpose, and satisfying relationships with others.

### What "Principles of Association" Should Colleges Affirm?

It paints too negative an image to suggest that young people are universally disinterested in connection and social trust. Surveys show a genuine interest in improving race relations, protecting the environment, and engaging in community service. Many young people are, as other observers have suggested, "cynical idealists" willing to make serious commitments to causes beyond themselves, if given proper encouragement and leadership.

Likewise, there is evidence older adults are concerned about the deterioration in community. Many can see a future described by Charles Handy (1994) who wrote in his book, *The Age of Paradox*, that "loneliness may be the real disease of the next century, as we live alone, work alone, and play alone, insulated by our modem, or walkman, or our television" (p. 259). They too are looking for leadership, and sometimes find it in religious institutions, the communitarian movement, or in literal recreations of rural villages like the Florida "Seaside" development.

Leadership in affirming the importance of community also needs to come from colleges. Offering that leadership requires defining our guiding principles. Three principles seem predominant:

■ **Those who associate in the college community are committed to the pursuit of truth.** The "truth" pursued may be large or small or, ideally, a combination of both. The questions asked might include whether there

is a broader meaning in life; how a "good life" should be defined; what obligations individuals have to the larger society (as well as past and future generations); how people can better understand the feelings and emotions of others; and what knowledge, technical skills, interests, and habits must be acquired to do productive and satisfying work.

When we talk about the "pursuit of truth," emphasis must be given to the word *pursuit*. Bitter experience has shown that even the most cherished truths have to be seen as hypotheses; although we still have to act and rely on them. The contrary perspective, that all essential truths are known, produces intellectual stagnation and a tendency to demonize those who disagree.

It is equally harmful, however, to assume no truth exists, or is entirely relative, depending on who has the power to define it. The view associated with National Socialist propagandists that "truth is what serves the German people" typifies the nihilism that led to the Holocaust. Similar opinions are routinely expressed as accepted wisdom by some intellectuals in the late 20th century, including many on American college campuses.

A better and wiser way of understanding the pursuit of truth was explained by British historian W.H. Walsh (1960), describing the writing of history. Historians, he said, see "truth" through the lens of time, culture, and ideology, akin to Thomas Kuhn's "paradigms" in the sciences. They should be compared to portrait painters, trying to capture the essence of an image. Each "portrait" by each historian will capture an *aspect* of the truth, so long as the historian is not deliberately deceitful or lacking in professional competency. Looking at *all* the portraits gives us an enhanced understanding of reality. In many ways this example highlights what we mean by "diversity" on campus. A respect for diversity does not mean that all truth is relative; it means trying to see what we can of a universal truth with greater richness and color.

The likelihood that we can capture an aspect of truth, however dimly, comports with common sense and Kuhn's seminal work, properly understood. Even as we move from paradigm to paradigm, our methods of inquiry are refined and our limitations better appreciated. It also appears we do learn a few things over time, reaching a general consensus, for example, that the universe does not rest on the back of a very large turtle.

■ **The pursuit of truth is guided by a process.** The habits and discipline associated with the scientific method are the best way we know to discover truth. Some worry that the scientific method precludes the use of intuition, but that reflects a misunderstanding of the avenues available to forming a hypothesis. As Einstein and other scientists have demonstrated, the process by which a hypothesis is formed is *usually* intuitive and often associated with a sense of beauty. At heart, following the scientific method means engaging in self-examination, honestly sharing information with others, and welcoming constructive criticism.

■ **The nature of our goal, and the process we use to pursue it, are molded by a permanent duty: to honor those who preceded us and to leave a better world to those who will follow.** In this sense, the voluntary association we create in college is simply a microcosm of the grandest association of all: the succession of human generations. No one said this better than John Dewey (1934) in his book, *A Common Faith*:

The ideal ends to which we attach our faith are not shadowy and wavering. They assume concrete form in our understanding of our relations to one another and the values contained in those relations. We who now live are parts of a humanity that extends into the remote past, a humanity that has interacted with nature. The things in civilization we most prize are not of ourselves. They exist by grace of the doings and sufferings of the continuous human community in which we are a link. Ours is the responsibility of conserving, transmitting, rectifying, and expanding the heritage of values we have received that those who come after us may receive it more solid and secure, more widely accessible and more generously shared than we have received it (p. 87).

### Adhering to Our Principles: What Virtues are Required?

Principles affirmed in theory have to be applied in practice. Doing so requires certain virtues and qualities of character. Those that seem especially important in the college setting are:

■ **Honesty.** It follows naturally that our goal of pursuing truth requires honesty. Wilfully deceiving ourselves or others defeats the objective of trying to gain a better understanding of the world and our role in it.

■ **Respect and civility.** Fully developed human beings are truth seekers, guided by reason and conscience, equipped with the capacity for communicating complex ideas in the present and over time through the creation of culture. No other animal has a similar stature. However we came to be, and for all our imperfections, we are miraculous creatures and we owe each other respect and civility.

■ **Self-restraint.** Plato and Aristotle had some profound disagreements, but they shared the view that the foundation of ethics is self-restraint. Self-restraint is especially important to the academic enterprise; we have to have the mental discipline to examine our own ideas, reject them if they do not work, and start again with a new or refined hypothesis. This process can be a sharp blow to the ego and intensely painful. But those who persevere display the greatest integrity and become some of our grandest heroes.

■ **Empathy and compassion.** Reflecting upon the succession of generations, as described by John Dewey, should enhance an appreciation of the struggles and suffering of others. Doing so will also help us remember our capacity for error and the complex realities of human nature — nicely summarized by Martin Luther King, Jr.'s observation that "each of us has two selves, and the great burden in life is to keep the higher self in command" (cited in Frady, 1983). If moral perfectionism is our goal, we will inflict needless pain on others and make hypocrites of ourselves. The best we can expect — given the fact we live on Earth, not in Heaven — is a determined effort to follow the highest commands of reason and conscience.

■ **A sense of responsibility.** Our object, as social animals, goes beyond simply trying to enhance our own personal and moral development. Recognizing a succession of generations means honoring those who preceded us by actively working to make a better world. Even young children understand this concept, as expressed by Antoine de St. Exupery (1942), when he wrote in *Flight to Arras* how the death of a younger brother revealed to him the "essence" of our humanity:

He was very serious, this younger brother who was to die in twenty minutes. He had called me in because he felt a pressing need to hand on part of himself to me. "I want to make my will," he said; and he blushed with pride and embarrassment to be talking like a grown man. Had he been a builder of towers he would have bequeathed to me the

finishing of his tower. Had he been a father, I would have inherited the education of his children. . . But he was a child, and what he confided to my care was a toy steam engine, a bicycle, and a rifle. . .

When the body sinks into death the essence of man is revealed. Man is a knot, a web, a mesh into which relationships are tied. Only those relationships matter. The body is an old crock that nobody will miss. I have never known a man to think of himself when dying. Never (p. 389).

### How Virtues Can be Taught

One of the great (recent) failings in American education has been a group-think acceptance of the assumption that it is somehow intellectually unsophisticated to try to identify and affirm the core values that make social life possible. This was a point made by Charles L. Glenn (Professor of Educational Policy at Boston University) and Joshua Glenn (a Boston inner-city middle school teacher) in a review of recent books on character education in the journal, *First Things*.

The Glenns (1993) report on a survey of undergraduate students "at one of the most selective schools of education" in the United States. The students were asked to assume that they were to teach a seventh grade course in moral education and given the option of choosing between two models.

The first model focused on values clarification and urged students "to be nonjudgmental about values that differ from their own." The second model involved "a conscious effort to teach specific virtues and character traits such as . . . self-control, honesty, responsibility . . . [and] charity," primarily by teaching "memorable examples from history, literature and current events."

The reactions of the education majors, according to the Glenns, would "come as no surprise to any reader with recent experience in American schools" and colleges:

88 percent of [the] future teachers selected the first approach, and only 9 percent, the second. Nearly half of the ninety-four students participating said they would *refuse* to use the method that involved teaching virtues and positive character traits.

There is a remarkable discontinuity between what some future teachers say they will not teach and what a vast majority of American parents think is important. For example, a 1994 survey of over 1,100 Americans

(550 of them parents of school children), done by the research group, Public Agenda Foundation (1994), found that "ninety-seven percent of both white and African-American parents say schools should teach 'honesty and the importance of telling the truth'" (p. 46).

On the issue of character education, the parents are right. They know we can not live in a world where we are dependent upon the very virtues we refuse to affirm. Our inclination to do so brings to mind an observation from C.S. Lewis (1955) in his *Abolition of Man*:

. . . such is the tragicomedy of our situation — we continue to clamor for those very qualities we are rendering impossible . . . In a sort of ghastly simplicity we remove the organ and demand the function. We make men without chests and expect of them virtue . . . We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful (p. 35).

Whether by their own initiative, the demands of parents, or some combination of both, attitudes of public school administrators and teachers are changing quickly. One of the fastest transitions in American education has been from "values clarification" to the movement for character education in the schools. A major impetus for the character education model is Ernest L. Boyer's (1995) book, *The Basic School*. Boyer's model of the "Basic School" is a community that "affirm[s] its own commitment to character," by promoting seven virtues: honesty, respect, responsibility, compassion, self-discipline, perseverance, and giving (pp. 183-84).

More students who have completed character education programs will be coming to colleges. We need to build upon the foundation they have been given. Our approach should include habituation, but must expand to encourage critical examination — a process in which ethical values are refined, better understood, and adopted as one's own.

An ethical development program at the college level might include:

■ **Clearly stating community values, including academic honesty, civility, and respect for freedom of thought and expression.** A values statement should be contained in literature describing the college to prospective students, and included in the application for admission. Also, if we think of a college as a voluntary association, we might revive the process by which students are "matriculated" or "formally installed" into our association — ideally by some sort of ritual or signing ceremony at orientation.

■ **Treating our statement of values as more than stale dogma.** John Stuart Mill argued that freedom of expression needed to be protected so that our most cherished values could be questioned, enlivened, reaffirmed, or transformed in the crucible of debate. We should discuss our rules with students, listen to their concerns, and make changes as needed. Various aspects of the Honor Code at the University of Virginia, for example, are regularly debated and voted upon by the student body. These votes and debates have not threatened Virginia's Honor Code tradition; they have helped to keep it alive.

■ **Asking students ethical questions, both in and out of class.** One of the greatest failings in higher education is the failure to discuss ethical issues, outside a few specialized courses. There are many opportunities to pose questions that encourage ethical thinking — for example, asking a student whether a career she is contemplating will promote a “good” life, and how a “good” life might be defined. Other subjects also invite provocative inquiries, such as whether emotional commitment should accompany sexual relationships.

■ **Role modeling.** Faculty members and administrators become role models not by trying to display the impossible quality of moral perfection, but by committing themselves to worthwhile goals, engaging in community service, displaying courtesy and empathy, and honestly admitting errors and shortcomings.

■ **Giving students significant responsibility to manage their own affairs.** Professor Donald L. McCabe (1993) at Rutgers University has conducted extensive research on self-reported academic dishonesty by students. He found that significantly less cheating occurs at honor code schools, compared to comparable schools without honor codes. An important conclusion is inescapable: student behavior can be influenced by the campus environment, especially when we give students significant authority and responsibility to influence their peers.

■ **Encouraging the development of empathy.** Ethical reasoning does not lead inevitably to ethical action. As Samuel and Pearl Oliner (1988) wrote in *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe*, those individuals who risked their lives to save Jews from the Nazis were encouraged at an early age to see “the basic

universal similarity of all people” (p. 143). With that foundation, what distinguished the rescuers was not academic training in logic or morals, but the habit of making “connections with others in relationships of commitment and care,” and treating “ordinary people” with civility and courtesy (Oliner & Oliner, 1988, pp. 259-60). These are characteristics we can foster by emphasizing the fundamental similarity, as well as the diversity, of people; by giving students opportunities to work together in ways in which they learn to depend upon one another; and by encouraging simple acts of kindness.

■ **Creating environments where personal interaction can flourish.** Stanford University President Gerhard Casper (1995) has written that:

[T]he residential version of the American college may have no equal . . . in challenging prejudices, and . . . in bringing about new ways of relating to one another. Its emphasis on socialization and peer interaction, in the eyes of many, makes the college environment, as distinguished from the college curriculum, a formative and formidable experience that is valued in its own right, independently of any academic purposes. The right of passage is one reason, anthropologically speaking, Americans go to college . . . (p. 25).

If we are to remain dynamic, value-added associations, we will need to create and maintain physical environments where human interaction can occur in the richest and fullest sense. We will have to avoid turning our student unions, dining facilities, and residence halls over to fast food franchises and private landlords — remembering that our primary duty goes beyond providing “services,” and encompasses individual and community development.

■ **Promoting group bonding through service.** Some form of bonding is likely to occur when colleges place large numbers of people in close proximity, especially in a society where there is an increasing sense of loneliness and a desire for connection. The bonding will take place either in destructive cults or dysfunctional fraternities, or in groups or communities dedicated to service. Colleges must help create and nurture the latter, sometimes by challenging student associations to adhere to their stated ideals; ideals which compliment in theory the principles expressed in our voluntary association.

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■ **Enforcing reasonable rules.** Colleges, like other voluntary associations, need to set and enforce reasonable rules and standards. Those rules and standards must be widely shared and frequently discussed. When violations are proven, penalties must be imposed, including the penalties of suspension or expulsion. The imposition of just penalties is not an arbitrary act of cruelty, but a necessary way to affirm shared values, as well as the autonomy and personal responsibility of offenders. Ideally, after penalties are imposed, most offenders are welcomed back to the community with a sense of forgiveness.

■ **Enforcing rules fairly.** A sense of community and association cannot last if rules are enforced in an arbitrary manner. Procedural fairness is required more than procedural complexity. The heart of procedural fairness is treating others the way we would want to be treated, and *hearing* cases before deciding them.

## Conclusion

We ask students to join us in association, but rarely state what our associations are designed to accomplish. Beyond the broad and nebulous terms *tolerance* and *diversity*, what values do we affirm? What virtues do we encourage?

We are confused about our relationship with students because we are confused about our goals. That result is deadly, given the technological change coming upon us — a technological change threatening to transform the nature of teaching and the nature of learning.

Colleges will not stop the advance of technology; they should not try. Our enhanced capacity for electronic communication will create a hunger for richer, personal connection across the entire spectrum of the population.

We should learn to use new technology, as some are doing now, to enrich *local* communities; to bring people to events and activities where deeper, value-added fellowship is possible. Fostering that kind of fellowship is something student affairs people do well.

Creating value-added communities now and in the 21st century will require treating students as adults. Some will be adults in middle age or older. Others will be young adults, in one of life's most formative periods. Some will be on campus often. Others will do most of their work elsewhere, returning occasionally for a sense of place and for the warmth of personal interaction. Increasing numbers of people will decide to spend their final years of life living near colleges, and participating in college life, both as learners and as teachers. All will benefit, as American society has demonstrated repeatedly, from a commitment to associating with each other in the affirmation of shared principles and the virtues that bring those principles to life.

In this setting, and with these goals, those who are student affairs administrators now and in the next century will not be part of a declining profession, clinging to marginal work in electronic universities. They will, instead, be creators, guides, mentors, and protectors of one of the most important and cherished aspects of American culture: the capacity for voluntary association.

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### About the Author

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Gary Pavela is director of judicial programs at the University of Maryland-College Park and edits the national quarterly, *Synthesis: Law and Policy in Higher Education* and its sister publication, *Synfax Weekly Report* — publications to which over 1,200 colleges and universities in the United States and Canada subscribe. He has an M.A. in intellectual history from Wesleyan University, a law degree from the University of Illinois, and has been a Fellow at the University of Wisconsin Center for Behavioral Science and Law. A former practicing attorney in New York, Pavela was a law clerk to the late Chief Judge Alfred P. Murrah of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit, and has been a faculty member for the Federal Judicial Center in Washington, D.C. (the training arm of the U.S. Courts).

Identified by the *New York Times* as an "authority on academic ethics," he is past president of the National Center for Academic Integrity, a consortium of 85 universities that collaborate on academic integrity policies and procedures. He has been a consultant on legal issues and student conduct policies at many leading universities, including Stanford University, the University of Michigan, Rutgers University, the U.S. Naval Academy, Lehigh University, and Colgate University.

In 1995, Pavela was awarded the American College Personnel Association's Travey R. Teele Memorial Award for "contributions to the area of judicial affairs and legal issues."

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